CHAPTER LI

SEQUEL TO NIVELLE OFFENSIVE

To clear up the doubt that existed in the minds of our Commander-in-Chief and C.I.G.S. as to French intentions, it was finally decided at the end of April that a Conference should be held in Paris at which the political and military Chiefs should be present. It was fixed for 4th May. On the 1st May the Imperial War Cabinet considered very carefully the line which the British representatives should take at the Conference. Some days before the *Smuts visits* meeting General Smuts paid a special *G.H.Q.* visit to Headquarters in France in order to ascertain the exact position. Sir Douglas Haig seems to have taken advantage of the visit to impress upon General Smuts the importance of an offensive to clear the Flanders coast. He came back full of the idea. At my request, he put the whole of his views upon the military situation into writing. As the document is an interesting survey of the position as it appeared at that time to a competent and independent observer, it is worth quoting literally the views he expressed.